

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 258089

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TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 258089

PASS TO RICHARD BLOOMFIELD

FOLLOWING REPEAT TEGUCIGALPA 5038 SENT ACTION SECSTATE
NOVEMBER 21ST:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 5038

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: OCON, OAS, PINT, PFOR, HO

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH CARLOS ROBERTO REINA, GOH

DELEGATE TO QUITO MEETING

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN CONVERSATION WITH POLOFF NOVEMBER 19 CARLOS ROBERTO REINA STRONGLY CRITICIZED OUTCOME OF QUITO MEETING AND U.S. ROLE. REINA WAS A MEMBER OF THE GOH DELEGATION AND IS THE LEADER OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT FACTION OF THE LIBERAL PARTY. HE CONCLUDED THAT OUTCOME OF SITUATION IN WHICH MAJORITY VIEW WAS DEFEATED WILL BADLY DAMAGE EFFECTIVENESS OF OAS. HE ASSERTS THAT HE IS BEING CONSIDERED FOR VACANT POSITION OF FOREIGN MINISTER. TURNING TO DOMESTIC SITUATION HE CONCLUDED THAT NO MAJOR CHANGES IN GOH PERSONNEL ARE LIKELY UNTIL JANUARY, 1975. END SUMMARY.

1. POLOFF CALLED ON CARLOS ROBERTO REINA ON NOVEMBER 19. HE IS THE LEADER OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT OF THE LIBERAL PARTY AND WAS A GOH DELEGATE TO THE RECENT QUITO MEETING. REINA
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PAGE 02 STATE 258089

BELIEVES THAT THE FAILURE TO LIFT THE CUBA SANCTIONS

REPRESENTS A SERIOUS DANGER TO THE FUTURE OF THE OAS BECAUSE THE DEFEAT OF THE MAJORITY REPRESENTS A VIOLATION OF DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES. HE STRONGLY FAVORED LIFTING THE SANCTIONS AS BEING THE PROPER OAS ACTION AND IS CONSEQUENTLY VERY CRITICAL OF THE USG POSITION. HE VIEWS THE CONCEPT OF NEUTRALITY AS REPUGNANT TO THE NATURE OF THE OAS AND SAID THAT THE US, AS DE FACTO LEADER OF THE HEMISPHERE, SHOULD HAVE POSITIVELY STATED ITS POSITION AND VOTED. HE IS PARTICULARLY OFFENDED THAT THE MAJORITY WAS DEFEATED BY THE NEGATIVE ACTIONS OF URUGUAY, CHILE AND PARAGUAY, WHICH HE REGARDS AS OPPRESSIVE REGIMES. HE ADDED THAT NICARAGUA'S WILLINGNESS TO DO WHATEVER THE US WISHES IS A GREAT EMBARRASSMENT AND THAT EVEN SMALL COUNTRIES MUST MAINTAIN DIGNITY.

2. REINA SAID THAT HE RECOGNIZES THAT THE US WAS IN A DIFFICULT POSITION AND THAT HE PERCEIVED THAT THE USG DELEGATES WERE VERY UNCOMFORTABLE IN THEIR ROLE. HE FURTHER SAID THAT HE WAS A PARTICIPANT IN A CONVERSATION WITH PANAMANIAN FONMIN TACK AND A US DELEGATION MEMBER IN WHICH THE LATTER SAID THAT THE US IS NO LONGER INTERESTED IN CUBA BUT THAT THE PRIME U.S. FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVE IN LATIN AMERICA IS THE MAINTENANCE OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH PANAMA IN ORDER TO SECURE A SATISFACTORY CANAL TREATY. REINA FEELS THAT BIG POWER POLITICS PLAYED A ROLE IN FORMING THE U.S. POSITION AND HE HAS INFERRED THAT THE US ENJOYS SEEING LARGE SOVIET EXPENSES INVOLVED IN KEEPING CUBA SOLVENT.

3. REINA'S VIEWS ON THE QUITO MEETING WERE PUBLISHED IN TIEMPO NOVEMBER 19.

4. REINA COMMENTED THAT HE WAS ASKED TO JOIN THE DELEGATION BECAUSE HE IS A LONG TIME HONORARY ADVISOR OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND BECAUSE HIS WELL KNOWN VIEWS ON THE CUBA QUESTION COINCIDED WITH GOH POLITY. HE ACCEPTED BECUASE HE FEELS IT IMPORTANT THAT FROM TIME TO TIME POLITICIANS PARTICIPATE IN THE AFFAIRS OF MILITARY GOVERNMENTS. HE ADMITTED THAT HE HAS RECEIVED SOUNDINGS ABOUT BECOMING FOREIGN MINISTER. DELEGATION HEAD ARTURO PINEDA BROUGHT THE QUESTION UP TWICE
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 STATE 258089

DURING THE QUITO MEETING, HE SAID. HOWEVER, THE POSITION HAS NOT BEEN FORMALLY OFFERED. IF IT IS HE WILL ACCEPT ONLY ON THE CONDITION THAT CHIEF OF STATE LOPEZ FORMALLY SCHEDULE ELECTIONS AND A RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES. THE ELECTIONS WOULD NOT HAVE TO BE IN THE NEAR FUTURE BUT HE WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN A MILITARY GOVERNMENT WHICH IS COMMITTED TO HOLDING POWER INDEFINITELY.

5. TURNING TO DOMESTIC AFFAIRS, REINA DOES DOES NOT SEE ANY FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES IN THE NEAR FUTURE. SEVERAL CIVILIANS (INCLUDING FORMER AMBASSADOR TO U.S. GALVEZ BARNES) ARE STILL WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES TO ENCOURAGE THE FORMATION OF A JUNTA WITH CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP. REINA DOES NOT VIEW THIS AS TOO LIKELY. HOWEVER, HE SAYS THAT AFTER THE FIRST OF NEXT YEAR LOPEZ MIGHT WELL GIVE UP HIS POSITION OF CHIEF OF STATE AND REMAIN CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES. LOPEZ, HE SAYS, LACKS LEADERSHIP QUALITIES BUT IS THE ONLY PERSON HAVING SUFFICIENTLY GOOD RELATIONSHIPS WITH BOTH THE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN FORCES, TO BE LEADER OF THE COUNTRY. HE DOUBTS OTHER OFFICERS ARE WELL ENOUGH KNOWN TO BE ACCEPTED BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

6. TURNING TO GOVERNMENTAL CHANGES EFFECTED BY THE MILITARY, HE SEES ONLY COLONELS MELGAR AND MIGUEL ANGEL GARCIA AS BEING STRONG ENOUGH TO ATTEMPT ANY MOVES. HE DEPLORES THIS POSSIBILITY SINCE BOTH ARE UNITED WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND ANY ACTION ON THEIR PART WOULD BE A MOVE TO THE RIGHT. HE ADDED THAT HE WAS CONVINCED THAT LOPEZ WOULD USE ARMED FORCE TO RESIST ANY ATTEMPT TO REMOVE HIM BUT THAT HE MIGHT NEGOTIATE A REDUCTION OF HIS ROLE.

7. REGARDING THE CABINET, REINA VIEWS MINFIN ACOSTA BONILLA AS THE STRONGEST MINISTER. ALTHOUGH MINECON BENNATON OFTEN DISAGREES, IT IS ACOSTA WHO WINS. HE THINKS THAT ACOSTA DELIBERATELY PULLED THE RUG FROM UNDER BATRES ON THE SALVADORAN QUESTION FOR PERSONAL POLITICAL ADVANTAGE. HE FEELS THAT IF ACOSTA HAD MERELY DISAGREED ON PRINCIPLE THAT HE COULD HAVE NEGOTIATED WITH BATRES. REINA FURTHER FAULTS GENERAL LOPEZ FOR SITTING QUIETLY "BLOWING CIGAR SMOKE IN THE AIR" WHILE ACOSTA DESTROYED BATRES.

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PAGE 04 STATE 258089

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